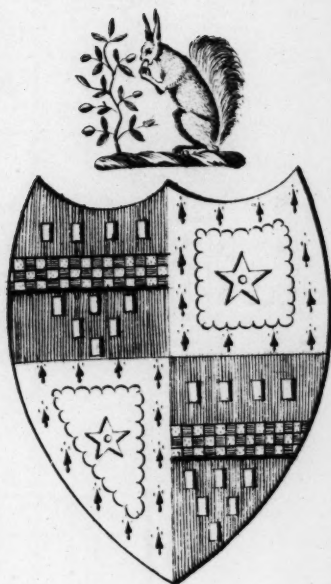
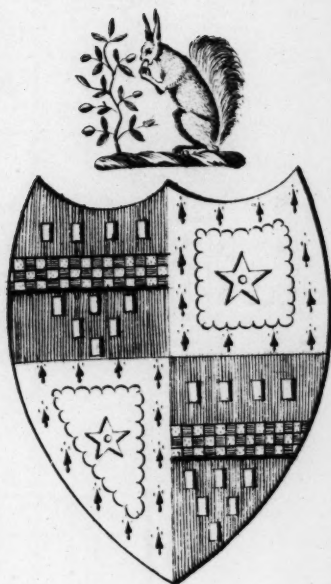




*Harry Lancelot Lee Esq.*



*Harry Lancelot Lee Esq.*



~~MLL~~  
Lee

2 Vols  
First Edition

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PHILOSOPHICAL QUINCY

NEW YORK

WILLIAM KELLEY

1851

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THE

PHILOSOPHICAL QUIXOTE;

OR,

M E M O I R S

OF

*Mr. DAVID WILKINS.*

IN A

SERIES of LETTERS

VOL. I.

---

L O N D O N.

Printed for J. JOHNSON, in St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXXXII.



## P R E F A C E.

*T*HE private correspondence of some of the greatest geniusses of this nation has been made public without their knowledge; and, in some cases, contrary to their inclination. If this be not admitted, as an excuse, it must be at least as a precedent, for the publication of the following epistles.

The singularity of Mr. Wilkins's character, as drawn by the correspondent of Mr. Dennis, occasioned the last mentioned gentleman to be liberal in shewing the letters to his friends, in order that they might share with him in the entertainment. I, among many others, was favoured with the perusal of them; and being perhaps more delighted with them than others, had the curiosity to take copies. The pleasure which  
they

*they have afforded me, has prompted me to give them to the public ; and I cannot but think that there are many who will thank me for having furnished them with such a repast. If I have guessed wrong, I have only to hope that the public will impute it to a natural, and may I add, benevolent desire of making others as happy as myself. On this ground I hope also for Mr. Dennis, and his ingenious correspondent's pardon. Should this, however, not be obtained, I shall at least escape their personal resentment, as it will not be possible for them to discover, with certainty, who it is that has thus published their letters.*

*The reader will perceive that what follows is but part of Mr. Harcourt's correspondence, and as I have given his epistles in the order of time, it has so happened that*

## P R E F A C E.

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*that the present ones are on subjects the most abstruse of any in the whole collection. There is also less bustle than is exhibited by those which succeed. In the latter the reader will not only be more deeply interested for the fate of the lovers, but Mr. Wilkins himself will become a more public man; and his singularities will also be such as to come wholly within the comprehension of readers of ordinary capacities. With these letters, however, I shall not presume to trouble the world, if the present ones are not found acceptable.*

## T H E E D I T O R.

*P. S. The Editor residing at some distance from the press, and having, therefore, been obliged to leave the revisal of the sheets to others, several errata have escaped their notice, which the candid reader, for the reason  
given,*



# P R E F A C E.

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*given, is earnestly requested to pardon. In the running title, for example, there are two t's in Quixote, whereas there ought to be but one. Also*

Vol. I. Page 5, Line 10, for *by way of*  
read as

P. 15, l. 15, dele *which was*

P. 34, l. 3, for *effect*, read *success*

P. 72, l. 3, read *repeat my request*

P. 81, l. 15, for *effects* read *effect*

Vol. II. Page 85, l. 16, for *discoveries* read  
*performances.*

THE  
PHILOSOPHICAL QUIXOTTE;  
OR,  
MEMOIRS  
OF  
*Mr. DAVID WILKINS.*

LETTER I.

TO Mr. SAMUEL DENNIS.

DEAR SIR,

AFTER a delightful journey of sixteen hours, I arrived, on Friday last, at my new habitation; and have the satisfaction to inform you, that only your company is wanting to render my situation, in every respect,

VOL. I.

B

“ as

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as agreeable as while at Mr. C——'s. The town in which we live, is situated in an hollow between two ridges of hills about five miles apart. We have trees in abundance, which I look upon as the life of a country prospect; and as the fields in this part of the world are enclosed with lofty hedges, the scene around us is perfectly rural. The town itself is pretty large. It is well supplied with water from the numerous springs in the neighbourhood; a rivulet running on each side of every street as clear as chrystal. The inhabitants are much more civil and polite than I was taught to expect in a country town. An assembly is held, once a week, in an elegant room over the Town-hall, for dancing and cards.

A com-

## QUIXOTTE.

3

A company of strolling players have fixed their residence here for the season ; and tho' they are not equal to those which you and I have been accustomed to see in London, they perform tolerably well, considering the disadvantages under which they exhibit, and are highly applauded by the inhabitants, who have never been used to better. In London, people live for years in the same street without, perhaps, ever speaking to each other ; but here it is very different. A social intercourse is kept up by the gentry, under which term is included every tradesman of credit in the place. They regularly visit twice a week, and the company meet at the house of each of the visitors in rotation. But the gen-

B 2

tllemen

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tllemen keep up a good fellowship also in another way ; for there is hardly a night but they assemble at some reputable drinking-house, where they smoke, sing, and get drunk in the most convivial and amicable manner. In the neighbourhood there are two packs of hounds belonging to two of our 'squires, one or other of which is out almost every day ; and as that diversion is new to me, I have been indulged in it by my master several times. In London, dear Dennis, a journeyman apothecary is looked upon as a mere negro ; and a gentleman would think his table disgraced by the presence of one of them. But the case is otherwise in S—— : I am admitted without scruple among the first company

pany in the town; and being a Londoner, my acquaintance is even courted by them. You will not suspect me either of vanity or falshood, when I inform you that the ladies in particular pay me the most flattering attention. With grief, however, I add, that my finances oblige me to deny myself those happineſſes which my ſtation entitles me to, and by way of a colourable apology for my conduct, I find it very convenient to pretend an attachment to ſtudy, which by the way, has a wonderful effect on their opinion of my profeſſional abilities. My father, though ſtraitened in his circumſtances, had yet the ambition to bring up his ſon to a genteel calling. By his late letters I am

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given to understand, that my apprenticeship being expired, farther assistance is not to be expected from him. That however desirous he may be to afford it me, the duty which he equally owes to his other children, forbids it: That having been at the expence of educating me in a liberal profession, I must now shift for myself; and that it will be my own fault, if, with these advantages, I do not make my fortune. This explanation was by no means in consequence of any solicitation on my part: Whatever were my hopes, I had not as yet asked him for a farthing; and I now cheerfully acquiesce in my doom:— Yet I cannot but reflect on the hard fate of a journeyman apothecary under  
such



such circumstances. For example, I must appear like, and in every respect support the character of, a gentleman, with the small salary of *sixteen* pounds, which is less than that given to the footman in our family; who has besides, his cloathing, and many other emoluments, to which I have nothing equivalent. This does not appear very reasonable, when we consider the difference of the sums expended on our respective educations.—But I will not enter on a subject, concerning which you need no information.

I meant to have given you an account of my present governor and his mansion in this letter; and perhaps it

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would have been more regular to have begun with those subjects first; but we have not usually stood upon ceremonies; and the sheet is already so full, that I must defer these matters to a future opportunity.

I am, dear DENNIS,

Your sincere,

And affectionate Friend,

J. HARCOURT.

LETTER

## LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

I N my last I gave you a general idea of the town in which I sojourn. In this, I shall confine myself to *affairs domestic*, and give you an account of my situation within doors. You will perceive it to be very different from, though not less agreeable, than at Mr. C——'s.

My master, Mr. David Wilkins, is of a middle stature, and about fifty years of age; though by his appearance, I should have taken him to be at least ten years older. This, as I since learn, is owing to his having of late years,  
greatly

greatly addicted himself to study, which indeed I conjectured on first seeing him, from his pale countenance and retired absent look. In his dress, he unites the plainness of a Quaker with the negligence of a philosopher. His temper appears to be good, though from his thoughts being continually absorbed in study, he has even more than the usual share of English taciturnity. His business, like that of most country practitioners, extends to every branch of the medical profession. He is chemist, druggist, man-midwife, surgeon, and apothecary; which last, by the custom of England, includes both pharmacy and the practice of physic. He has for some years enjoyed the business of the town and its environs, without a rival;  
for

for though several have attempted to oppose him, so great was the opinion entertained of Wilkins's abilities, that they met with no encouragement. Of late, however, he has rather sunk in the opinion of the town's people, for reasons which I may hereafter explain. As he is by no means extravagant, he must by this time have amassed a considerable fortune. He is now a widower; and his wife, I am told, was such a termagant, that he is determined against all thoughts of a second venture. He has but one child, a daughter, now at the boarding-school, of whom he is extremely fond. She is said to be about seventeen or eighteen years of age, of a temper the reverse of her mother, and perfectly accomplished and agreeable.

Mr.

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Mr. Wilkins appears to have had a good general education, at least of the modern kind. He speaks French fluently, and is pretty well acquainted with Latin and Greek; he has also made considerable proficiency in the mathematics. But his principal *forte*, and which he most values himself upon, is his knowledge in natural philosophy, particularly the chemical and medical branches of it, of which he is an enthusiastic admirer. He constantly rises at six in the morning, and never goes out, unless in cases of emergency, till twelve. His time, between these hours, is wholly employed in his philosophical pursuits. Behind his dwelling-house, which contains nothing remarkable, is an out-house, of one story, which

which he has built for the purpose of his philosophical and chemical experiments. \* The principal room in this building is the elaboratory, where we also prepare our medicines, chemical and galenical ; many of the former in a manner sufficiently singular. Besides the usual apparatus of retorts, receivers, sand heats, alembics, &c. there is not, I believe, a chemical contrivance that has of late years been invented, with which it is not furnished ; for example, the various apparatus for procuring the different kinds of air ; for the distilling of acid, alkaline, and ætherial spirits, &c. together with tubes of all kinds, eudiometers, thermometers, barometers, air pumps, and a catalogue of others, which would require Homer's  
mer's



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mer's *lungs of brass* to enumerate. For as he reads all the new publications in this way, and makes a point of repeating the experiments, you will easily imagine that he must have no inconsiderable variety. These, when not in use, are hung up around the walls, or placed on proper shelves, by way of ornament, like the armory at St. James's or the tower. We have a variety of processes continually going on, either for use or curiosity; and some of the fires, for particular operations, have not been out for these twelve months past. The room on the right is destined to anatomical, physiological, electrical, and other similar pursuits, and is accordingly decorated with a great variety of preparations, skeletons, and  
the

the numerous sets of instruments necessary to those enquiries. The left room is his study, in which is a considerable library, consisting chiefly of medical and philosophical books, almost wholly modern; for the antients are held by him in the utmost contempt. It is here that he pursues his lucubrations for the good of the human race, which will one day be benefitted by the publication of his numerous performances, sufficient of themselves to form a tolerable library. While employed in this way he wears a large old rusty black cap, a morning gown (which was formerly striped with red and white, but the traces of which colours are now hardly discernible) bound round his waist with an old red garter; in which,  
and

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and his worn out slippers, he makes a very grotesque appearance. Behind the building is a garden ; part of which he has allotted to the purposes of botany, and experiments on vegetation.

The other inhabitants of our mansion are, an old maid, and a footman. The former has lived in the house upwards of fourteen years ; and that circumstance, together with her being somewhat advanced in life, and the only female domestic, gives her, as she imagines, a kind of right to that degree of authority which is usually exercised by the *mistress of a family*. As she takes sufficient care to maintain the *dignity* of the latter office, so does she likewise the *privilege* of her *sex* ; her tongue  
being

being by no means the least noisy or loquacious that I have heard. She is now on the wrong side of forty, and seems to be heartily tired of her virginity. But through want of even an ordinary portion of beauty (for I think she is one of the most forbidding mortals I ever beheld) she seems to be quite desperate; and therefore makes the utmost use of the privilege said to be allowed to her sex every fourth year; for it cannot so properly be said that Solomon courts Deborah, as that Deborah courts Solomon; and that in such a way, as, to a person of the least delicacy, would be perfectly nauseous and disgusting. With the wrinkles of sixty she awkwardly apes the coquetry of eighteen; and in her fondness, is (like a cat) even outrage-

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ous. Solomon, however, does not seem to be one of the nicest, and as she is reported to have saved money, he probably fees some more weighty charm in her than mere beauty. Solomon has lived the greatest part of his life in the medical way. He was originally errand boy to a druggist ; afterwards for many years footman to a physician ; and since then has been in the joint capacity of porter and footman to Mr. Wilkins. He is greatly addicted to study ; and with persons of his own rank passes for a very *deep man* ; his best qualification is as an assistant in the 'laboratory, of which employment he is very fond ; and wherein indeed he is extremely handy and useful.

In the partnership for life which is likely to commence between this singular couple, Deborah, I imagine, is to find the money, and Solomon the judgment. For as the former will hardly be able to think of lowering her present dignity, it seems to be her intention to set him up in an apothecary's shop; where, I suppose, he is to drudge on for the remainder of life, to support the intolerable vanity of his amiable fair one. By her discourse she seems to entertain hopes of his succeeding, or even coming into partnership with our Major Domo; and it would be pleasant enough to see how Wilkins would relish such a proposal.

I cannot but observe that, was I of a less easy disposition than I am usu-

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ally reckoned to be, it would be rather disagreeable to live in an house where there are a couple of servants thus circumstanced ; and who, by virtue of long servitude, seem to think themselves authorized to treat a journeyman, a new comer, and much younger than themselves, as an *inferior*. But I am happy enough to divert myself at the expence of their follies : and as, on account of my having a little knowledge of philosophy, I am already rooted in Wilkins's good graces, he allows me every indulgence that a journeyman can wish for ; which more than compensates for any little uneasiness that might arise from the other quarter.

I am, dear DENNIS,

Your's, sincerely, &c.



# QUIXOTTE.

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## LETTER III.

DEAR SIR,

**M**R. WILKINS being gone out, curiosity led me, yesterday, into the 'laboratory to examine the nature of the processes which were going forward, as I learned that some of them were not a little extraordinary; and as I should have been rather at a loss in understanding them myself, I prevailed on Solomon to give me such information as he was capable of affording. I have selected the following by way of specimen.

He first conducted me to an athanor furnace, in which was kept up a conti-

C 3

nual

nual fire; and where a number of processes, in little, seemed to be going on.

Among these, he shewed me several which were designed for the transmutation of acids; “an investigation to which his master had long applied himself, but which he had not as yet in any one instance been able to bring to perfection”; adding, “that he seemed to lament his want of success in what he still considered as practicable.”

In the same furnace he shewed me several phials, &c. containing pure water; which, he informed me, were placed there with a view to its conversion into *earth*. I could not but remark, that, like the bag of money in Esop, and the philo-

philosopher's stone, this experiment was probably proposed by some ingenious lover of chemistry, rather with a view to the general improvement of the science, than to the realizing of that particular idea.

In different furnaces were a variety of processes for the purpose of transforming the metallic calces into one another, with a view to the converting of all, or some of them, into those of silver or gold. A project not despaired of by others besides Mr. Wilkins, even in our days.

Experiments with quicksilver, in order to the rendering it solid in the usual temperature of the atmosphere.

A discovery which Solomon observed, would be attended with infinite advantages in the useful arts.

At the farther part of the 'laboratory I observed a tremendous triple pile of large casks, oil jars, glass receivers, and other vessels, which attracted my curiosity, but which, when I came to examine them, were empty ; though seemingly very carefully secured. On asking Solomon concerning them, he informed me that they were store vessels, or reservoirs of the various kinds of air, which his master kept ready extricated for chemical and medical purposes.

For example ; if he wanted to make spirit of salt, he had only to impregnate

nate water with marine acid air, which at once furnished him with this liquid; of a superior kind to that usually employed.

If he had occasion for the caustic spirit of sal ammoniac, he could immediately produce it in a very elegant way, by the mixture of water with alkaline air. If the mild sort was wanted, the addition of a proper quantity of fixed air, produced the effect. By a similar process, without water, he made his dry volatile alcali, and common sal ammoniac.

For making the nitrous acid he had two methods. The first was, by impregnating water with the nitrous acid air, or red vapour: but that his usual way

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way, and which he on several accounts preferred, was to make it by means of nitrous and common air, by decomposing the former over water.—He was going on ; but Mr. Wilkins happening to knock at the door, he was obliged to hurry away, and defer the remainder of his lecture to a future opportunity. I could not, however, but divert myself with these curious and round-about methods of making officinal preparations ; which, if generally adopted, will certainly be of infinite *use* to the public : an use which the illustrious discoverer of the several kinds of air, I imagine, never once dreamed of. I had now, however, a sufficient idea of the *man*, and determined in future to make him an object of  
of

of more particular attention. Discoveries in philosophy, *in proper hands*, may certainly be applied to the most advantageous purposes in medicine and the useful arts. But it is not a task for every one to attempt; and it requires, I believe, very different talents from those of Mr. Wilkins, to do it with any reasonable prospect of success.

I am, &c.

J. HARCOURT.

LETTER



## LETTER IV:

DEAR DENNIS,

FROM what I had seen in the laboratory, I had concluded too hastily relative to the utility of Mr. Wilkins's philosophical pursuits, as will more fully be seen in the course of this letter.

One morning he sent for me into the laboratory. He appeared by his countenance to be exceedingly grave and thoughtful, not without an evident mixture of sorrow. After musing a while, he addressed me to the following effect :

“ That having in the course of conversation had several occasions to observe,

serve,

serve, that I had a tolerable knowledge of natural philosophy, he had sent for me in order to have my opinion relative to a business of the utmost importance to mankind. The investigation of it had been attended with infinite difficulties, which had perplexed him exceedingly; and so confused his ideas, that he might be compared to a traveller who had lost his way, and was wandering in a labyrinth. But that the eye of a disengaged and discerning spectator might possibly enable him to extricate himself from the maze, by discovering the clue which might in future guide him in the right path."

He prefaced his explanation by observing, "that the sole end of philosophical

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sophical enquiries ought to be the *good of mankind*; and that he who engaged in them from mere motives of interest or fame, was unworthy the name of a philosopher. He preferred the most trifling discovery, if it could be applied to *real use*, to the theory of a NEWTON; and would rather have been the discoverer of the loadstone, than of the system of gravitation. His own enquiries were conducted wholly on that liberal principle; and nothing could make him so happy, as to be able to strike out something that might prove of general utility. He flattered himself, he had succeeded in this way in more instances than one, as would, perhaps, hereafter appear to the world. That with  
respect

respect to the processes he was now carrying on, they were, in general, very important in their nature; and from which he entertained the most sanguine expectations. He was convinced there were an infinite number of secrets yet remaining in the womb of nature, which, when discovered, would be found in the highest degree beneficial to the world; and he by no means despaired of being able to bring some of them to light. That let the event be what it would, no application should be wanting on his part: he was too sensible of the numerous evils and distresses under which mankind continued to labour, and was determined to exert his utmost abilities in order to alleviate or wholly remove

move them." He said a good deal more to the same purpose; and indeed his general and obvious character is that of benevolence and humanity; though, perhaps, there is one motive which will be found to take the lead of these, and I think, I can discern that it is the hope of the *glory of having made an useful discovery*, rather than the *discovery itself*, that actuates him to this kind of pursuit.

He then informed me, "that he had frequently had occasion to observe, with anguish of heart, the distresses of the poorer sort of people, and the great difficulty which a man with a large family had in providing them the necessary means of subsistence. That the prices  
of

of provisions were of late years so much advanced, that the truly indigent could hardly procure such as were fit to eat.

He had therefore frequently revolved in his mind, whether some method might not be discovered to obviate their distresses; and in particular, whether it might not be possible, by means of the chemical art, to procure wholesome aliment, at once, from those cheap, or rather, costless materials, from which it was daily formed by nature? *Common mould, mud, or earth*, for example, is, by vegetables, converted into a substance proper for animal nutriment, even as vegetable matters are, by animalization, brought still nearer to perfection. He had therefore tried

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a variety of methods, in order to effect so desirable a purpose, though hitherto, unfortunately without effect.

His former experiments, he observed, were founded on the idea, that there is in nature a *ferment* or *leven*, capable of converting mineral substances into vegetable or animal, as yeast converts flour into dough, or must into wine ; and that his researches had been directed to the attainment of such a menstruum. That there is such a ferment he observed, was too obvious to be disputed by him who considers the facts alluded to. He had endeavoured to extract it from almost every mineral substance in which he could imagine it to reside, and by  
every



every chemical process which his invention could suggest, but had not been so happy as to meet with success. That after so infinite a variety of trials he despaired of finding it, except in vegetables and animals themselves; his next view, therefore, was to obtain it pure from the other parts of those substances; and then, by investigating its chemical principles by a careful analysis, to learn to compound such a ferment from those principles directly. He had gone through a very great variety of processes, on an infinite number of vegetable and animal substances, with this view, but without meeting with any thing like the matter he was in quest of. Laying aside there-

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therefore all hopes of procuring the ferment itself in a separate state, he has since had recourse to vegetable and animal substances as *containing* the desired menstruum; by which means he imagined, that though he could not bring the discovery to the degree of perfection and cheapness which he first intended, he should yet *approximate* to it, and that in a very great degree. With this view, he had made a number of experiments with different vegetables, and different parts of those vegetables, and also with all the various kinds of soil or earth; varying their proportions and states, in every mode that his invention could devise: in heat, and cold, for example; in moisture

sture and dryness, in open and close vessels, in all the different kinds of factitious air, and in other circumstances too tedious to relate. That as it is known, that the influence of the sun's light is necessary to the perfection of vegetables, he had placed his materials in that exposure, in which case too he had varied the circumstances of the processes in every shape that he could invent; but hitherto in vain. Not finding vegetables alone to answer his purpose, he had mixed them with animal substances, in a sufficient variety of ways; and had since even tried what could be done with animal substance used without vegetables. With the stomach, for example; the gall, bladder,

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the liver, the pancreas; the various juices of these; the nervous medulla, the blood, the saliva, the flesh, the whole animal; in short, the experiments had been almost infinitely, but unsuccessfully varied, insomuch, that he was now wholly at a loss for further expedients; but that nevertheless he was still as confident as ever, that the thing was practicable, from its being performed before our eyes by nature every day; and earnestly requested me to assist him in the investigation of a fact so very interesting and important.

I listened to this curious harangue with attention and astonishment, and could hardly persuade myself he was

in

in earnest; though he spoke with such evident marks of real concern and distress as might have demonstrated that his heart was sincerely in the business. But on repeating his request, in still more ardent and impassioned terms, and the hints which had been given me of his odd turn of mind occurring, I was sufficiently convinced of his Quixotism; and after suffering my surprize to subside a little, answered him to the following purport.

“ That his philanthropy, and goodness of heart, appeared transcendentally indeed! That the world was under infinite obligations to gentlemen, who like him, spent their lives for the common good; and that the highest ho-

## 40 PHILOSOPHICAL

nours in its power to bestow, were an inadequate reward for such benevolent endeavours, even though they should not be fortunate enough to be crowned with success. The subject which he had chosen for investigation, was, in the highest degree, interesting; and if the discovery, which he was in quest of, could be perfected, it would be, without exception, the most useful that had yet been offered to mankind; but that in the present case, I humbly apprehended he was mistaken rather in the *object* than the *means*. That mineral matters were daily converted into vegetable, and afterwards into animal substances, was a fact too obvious to be disputed; but we had no reason

fon

son to suppose, from what we could observe in nature, that this was practicable by any other means than by vegetation, and animalization; that is, by the action of living vegetables, and animals. That different kinds of animals and vegetables were necessary to the assimilation of different vegetable, and mineral substances; but that these differences were such as did not by any means fall under the cognizance of our senses. That therefore, unless he could form these particular organized bodies, or others which would perform their effects, I conceived the subject of his enquiry would still remain a problem. For that dead animals and vegetables, instead of having power of assimilating other substances



stances to their nature, were on the contrary, by fermentation and putrefaction, continually returning to the state of those mineral substances, from which they were first extracted." I took some pains to explain to him my ideas, and indeed found his prejudice so strong that the utmost force of my rhetoric was absolutely necessary. In so delicate a matter too, I was obliged to act with caution to prevent giving offence. However, I at length succeeded, and he has since desisted from a prosecution of his visionary enquiry, though even yet he retains visible reliques of the keenest disappointment and mortification.

The reflections which may be drawn from this curious relation with regard  
to

to the direction of philosophical enquiries, are too obvious to need pointing out, at least to you. As this affair has not a little raised my curiosity, I shall be more attentive to this gentleman's pursuits than hitherto; and shall not fail to entertain you with whatever I may discover in this way concerning him, in future.

I am, dear DENNIS,

Your's, &c.

LETTER

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LETTER VI.

DEAR SIR,

AS I had acquired some knowledge of Mr. Wilkins's disposition, I could not resist a violent inclination which seized me, of putting a HUM upon him, and in consequence thereof, to have a little entertainment at his expence. In the sequel you have the result of my attempt in this way.

I had observed that he reads every thing that appears on philosophical and medical subjects, and makes it a rule to repeat the experiments, not so much for the sake of proving them, as to gratify a ridiculous curiosity. His  
prejudice

prejudice in favour of novelty seemed to be so great that perhaps there was no doctrine, however absurd, which he would not readily swallow, provided it came with that recommendation: and it always had the greater weight (a proof of his philanthropy) if it promised to be *useful to mankind*.

To one of our country news-papers, which he constantly reads, I sent the under-written pretended philosophical discovery. It was written indeed, and sent off in the heat of frolic, and I had no sooner dispatched it, than I reflected on the glaringness of the absurdity, and heartily repented of my precipitancy; for I could not imagine, that even in such a publication as that, a relation so  
evidently

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evidently void of probability could be inserted; I expected indeed to be handsomely *trimmed off* in their *answers to correspondents*. I had therefore began to draw up another paper; not less absurd indeed; but wherein the absurdity was so artfully covered that persons, not supposed to be adepts in philosophy, in the hurry of newspaper business, might not readily perceive it. Before I had finished this however, the former, to my utter astonishment, appeared; and not only had the desired effect on Mr. Wilkins, but (what you will think incredible) even imposed on some *whose names are foremost in the Republic of Science*. The account ran as follows; and as you are a philosopher, you will

will be able to enter into the spirit of the jest.

*A cheap and easy method of procuring DEPHLOGISTICATED AIR; calculated for the benefit of those afflicted with putrid and inflammatory diseases, &c. demonstrating that for so small a price as one shilling, any person may breath that salutary medium during a whole day; a discovery, which will therefore be of infinite benefit to mankind.*

Take one pound of nitre, and expell from it by heat, its dephlogisticated air. Let the patient breath a sufficient quantity of this through a bent tube, introduced into it through some lime water, in which the vessel  
containing

containing the air floats, and then expire it back again. The air returning from the lungs, is *infected by fixed air which is generated in the body, and thrown out by this organ as excrementitious*; but which is immediately absorbed by the lime water, and of course the air is restored very nearly to its former purity. The author of this account AFFIRMS, that the air thus breathed through lime water, will remain good THIRTY TIMES as long as it could when breathed in the ordinary way. Now we consume by each inspiration, about thirty inches of air, which is 450 inches in a minute, allowing fifteen inspirations for that time. And consequently the air usually employed in one minute, will now serve for breathing  
half



*half an hour.* But one pound of nitre yields 12,000 inches of pure air, which therefore is more than a patient will consume in *a whole day*, as twelve hours at least must be allowed for sleeping, and other necessary avocations; so that the whole expence will not amount *even to so trifling a sum as that mentioned in the title, &c. &c.*

This is the substance of the advertisement itself, to which I have added *et ceteræ*, as I am really ashamed to give the extravagant *puffing* and fulsome panegyric on the *author*, annexed to it in the original, in order that it might make the greater impression on Wilkins's imagination.—For the benefits which I led the public

to expect from *so glorious a discovery* were even infinite.

I was out on business when the news-paper came in. As soon as I returned, Mr. Wilkins (who, as appeared by his looks, as well as declarations, had waited with the utmost impatience for my return) flew into the shop, caught me eagerly by the hands, and with rapture in his eyes, told me “that he had just met with a most wonderful discovery in the news-paper, which promised to be of infinite service to mankind. But that he wondered still more, if possible, at the modesty of the author, in publishing, without his name, a discovery that would immortalize him, and stand in competi-

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competition with the most celebrated that have yet been revealed to the world!" He then informed me of the whole of the advertisement in general terms, and proposed immediately to set about repeating the experiment.

The *manner* in which he spoke this, would not permit me to doubt of his being in earnest, and it was with the utmost difficulty that I kept my countenance; though had I betrayed risibility, he would not have observed it. So eager was he on the experiment that he did not even wait for my opinion on the subject.

To work, therefore, he immediately went. The air was expelled

from the nitre ; a barrel filled with it, was properly placed in lime-water, and now for the test of the truth of the important *fact*, which he determined to try on his own respiratory organs. The quantity of air in the vessel would last, by my calculation, about fourteen or fifteen minutes.

When Mr. Wilkins is engaged in an experiment, he is so intent on it that he will not suffer himself to be interrupted by any concern either of business or interest ; which not unfrequently exposes him to inconveniences ; and this unluckily happened to be the case in the present instance. For he had hardly begun to breath the pure medium, when a servant in livery arrived

arrived in haste with a note, requiring his immediate attendance on Lady S—, who lives about two miles from the town, and who, in consequence of a fright, was suddenly taken in labour. I delivered to him the note, which he snatched from me, opened, and read, without intermitting his process, when suddenly reddening with ire, he tore it in a thousand pieces, and furiously threw it on the ground, uttering an oath (which I had never heard him do before) that “she might deliver herself and be d——d, for he would not be disturbed for any one.” Taking it for granted that the fit was only momentary, and that, considering the importance of the family as patients, he would presently alter his

resolution, I returned to the servant, and with a respectful message, as from W. desired him to inform Sir John that he would attend his lady immediately. The servant went away. But to my great surprize, I did not find that Mr. Wilkins was making any preparation for his journey. After about ten minutes I took the liberty to remind him of the message, with the urgency of the case ; but he flew in as great a passion as before, and seemed resolute not to be interrupted in his experiment. Dreading the consequence, I began to repent forely of my frolick ; and in order to undeceive him, and hasten his departure, was half inclined to confess to him the whole matter. But shame or fear restraining me, and still hoping  
that

that he would alter his determination, I waited a little longer for the event, especially as the time now drew near, when by my computation the dephlogisticated air would be rendered unfit for further respiration. At this instant however Sir John himself arrived, thundering at the door, his horse in a foam, and splashed with dirt; and vociferated in a most violent passion at Wilkins's delay; threatening not only to discard him from employment in his family, but to prosecute him for neglect as an accoucheur. As soon as his fury would permit me to interpose, I took the courage to assure him, that Mr. Wilkins was already on his journey to P——, and by this time certainly must be there. That



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he was in so great haste to relieve her ladyship, that he did not even take time to dress himself, but rode off in his studying dishabille, without waiting to saddle his horse, and had gone the nearest, though the worst and dirtiest way, in order that he might arrive there the sooner, which was the reason that his Worship had not met him on the road. Satisfied with this answer, he rode off. I flew instantly to the 'laboratory, and throwing myself on my knees, earnestly entreated him to go to the lady, as he valued his interest or reputation, and told him the message I had delivered to Sir John. But in as violent a rage as before, he expressed his resolution of not stirring for any one till the end of his process, so that

that I was now at my wit's end, and was about either to acknowledge the whole trick, or to request that I might go; and with a feigned excuse of his having met with an accident on the road, offer to officiate in his stead; when recollecting that the fifteen minutes were now nearly expired, and perceiving that Wilkins's inspirations were much less free and easy than when he began, it occurred to me, that as he was well enough acquainted with the doctrine of *the test of the purity of air*, and that he must, according to his usual custom, have fallen into the present error merely through want of due reflection, I suggested to him (as indeed I might have done when the messenger first came, but that I was too much confused

fused to think of it) that the whole experiment, which I had since carefully considered, was founded on a wrong principle. That it supposed the only noxious ingredient communicated to the air by inspiration to be *fixed air*, which, as appeared by the turbidness, was, I acknowledged, absorbed by the lime-water. But notwithstanding its being deprived of that principle, it must, according to my idea, be at this time highly impure; for that it was *phlogiston* which rendered it noxious with respect to respiration; from which lime-water, in the present process, was by no means calculated to free it. I earnestly requested he would make trial of it with the *eudiometer*, though I doubted not, but  
on

on his recollecting the circumstances mentioned, that test would be unnecessary. He was immediately convinced of the justness of my reasoning, and wondered it had not occurred to him before. He confessed that he now perceived his inspirations to be uneasy, and himself to be very giddy and feeble, though his prejudice concerning the event of the trial had, till now, diverted his attention from those particulars. And as the test proposed would take up some time, desired me to light him a candle; which he had no sooner immersed in a portion of the air, than it went out. Convinced of the fallacy of the fact, and nettled at having thus exposed himself, and endangered the  
loss

loss of a very profitable family, he broke the whole apparatus in a violent fit of passion; bestowed very hearty censures on the lying author of the account, begged pardon for the hastiness of his late expressions to me, and kindly and feelingly thanked me for the attention which I had manifested to his business and interest. He immediately ordered Solomon to bring out his horse, and was preparing to dress himself; but I prevented the latter by mentioning what I had told Sir John relative to his feigned departure. At the same time, I proposed to him, (and humbly hoped he would not consider it but as meant for his good) that in order to preserve the favour and confidence of the family, and furnish  
a suf-

a sufficient excuse for not attending sooner, he should take the road I had described to the Baronet; roll himself in the mud, of which he would there find plenty; affect lameness; and arriving in that condition, excuse his delay, by telling them that "his horse, through his haste to arrive, had stumbled and thrown him; and that the hurt which he had received from the violence of the fall, had for more than half an hour rendered him incapable of pursuing his journey; the truth of all which was, he presumed, sufficiently evident from the plight in which they beheld him." This I observed, could not fail to be a sufficient apology. He smiled heartily at the proposal, which he immediately determined

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terminated to adopt, and accordingly actually put it in execution. He arrived in the plight proposed just in time to deliver the lady, and save his fee, which, had he been five minutes later, he would have lost; and the delivery was probably hastened by the lady's risibility (notwithstanding her painful situation) at the ludicrous figure he made with his limping walk, bedaubed condition, and odd undress; all which, not only procured him pardon, but furnished ample subject of mirth to the lady and her gossips, who were highly entertained with the adventure. The affair even endeared him to the family, but particularly to the lady, who considered him as a martyr, at least a sufferer in  
her



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her cause. And you will believe me, when I tell you that the issue was matter of no less joy, than the occasion of it had been of merriment to,

Your sincere Friend, &c.

LETTER

## LETTER VII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

**E**VER since you knew me, (which was some years before I arrived at the age of fourteen) though I have been a general admirer of the sex, and have had no little commerce with them, you do not remember me to have ever been so far attached to any particular object as to feel that sentiment which is usually called *love*. You are conscious that I have always treated the very idea of that passion with ridicule; at you in particular I have laughed, and believed it impossible that I ever could become so weak as to fall into the same situation. You recollect, no doubt, the  
bravado

bravado expressions which I have almost constantly used on those occasions, as if I defied the utmost power of the ideal deity. But, alas! I find myself a mere mortal, like the rest of my sex; and the god whom I had so repeatedly and wantonly provoked, by my presumptuous sarcasms, has now taken his full revenge on me.

Since I wrote last, the Easter holidays have intervened, and Mr. Wilkins's amiable daughter has been home from the boarding school. She is now in her eighteenth year, rather taller than the usual stature: her shape is elegant, and not too slender; her features regularly beautiful, with a mixture of the lovely and majestic; her

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complexion is fair, her hair flaxen, her deportment graceful and easy, her temper sweetly mild, yet blended with becoming dignity and vivacity. Her countenance, though sufficiently open, has an unaffected but bewitching air of modesty, her conversation is sensible and elegant, and her voice so softly enchanting, that it is rather felt by the heart, than heard by the ear. All these charms, however, and many more, I observed without other emotion, than that usually felt on seeing a beautiful and accomplished woman. But as a finer object than ordinary, of any kind, natural attracts our attention, as I constantly dined with her, and was besides often in her company by accident, or otherwise, and

as

as I never had an opportunity of being so frequently in the company of a modest beauty before, it would not, I suppose, be wondered at by others, that she insensibly caught hold of my affections. Without reflecting on the consequences, however, I suffered my eyes to dwell with rapture on the charms of her person and mien; and my ears to be delighted with her enchanting tongue. When present she engaged my whole attention, and when absent she employed my thoughts. I dreamed of her when I happened to sleep, and was never happy awake, but when in her company. The night before she left us, we had a route, consisting of the most respectable of Mr. Wilkin's patients, but chiefly of

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the young ladies their daughters ; and at the request of several who knew her musical abilities, she sung several songs, which she accompanied on the guitar. Perhaps you will deem me partial or romantic. I have heard the most celebrated performers on the theatres and public places in London ; but in my judgment, her performance so far transcended theirs, that comparison was lost. I was not charmed, but transported ; she could not be said, like them, to delight the ear, she ravished the heart ; and I imagined myself in heaven, hearing an angel. After supper, dancing was proposed ; and, heavens ! shall I relate that Miss Wilkins fell to be my partner ! Language, dear Dennis, cannot describe

describe the extacy I felt during that blisful period : I fancied myself, like St. Paul, caught up into the third heaven!—My transport was too visible not to be observed by the amiable fair one, and might easily have been perceived by the whole company, had they deigned an attention to the meanest object in it; and I could not refrain from taking the first favourable opportunity to reveal to her the situation of my heart, and ardently to request the happiness of her countenancing my passion. She earnestly begged that I would be silent on the subject then, and also to be careful of my behaviour, lest the company should observe; but assured me, that she would speak with me, on that



particular, the first favourable opportunity of our being alone. As I could not now doubt but my wishes were crowned with success, I leave you to guess at the unspeakable transports I felt, which yet, in compliance with her request, I suppressed as much as possible during the evening. At twelve the company departed. I sought eagerly for an opportunity of speaking to my dear charmer alone that night; but my utmost vigilance was eluded, and I was obliged to retire, in this distracted situation, to my chamber. Sleep, you may well imagine, was banished from my eyes. Anxious to hear the confirmation of my happiness from her dear lips, I came down early, and waited in the most impatient suspense till she arose.

Mr.

Mr. Wilkins was busily engaged in his study — I flew to the parlour where she was alone, threw myself at her feet, and in the most ardent though respectful terms, requested that she would release me from my agony of doubt, by pronouncing the happy sentence. She answered me as follows:

“ I must acknowledge myself, Sir, greatly obliged for the good opinion which you express concerning me; but were it even my inclination, which however is by no means the case, yet the duty I owe to the best and most indulgent of parents, would render it impossible for me to comply with your request. And if you have that regard for me which you profess, you will

shew it by never mentioning the subject again."——I attempted to remonstrate, and to repeat in still more ardent terms. But perceiving my intention, she feigned an excuse for retiring to her chamber, and notwithstanding my earnest endeavours to detain her, broke gently from me, and respectfully withdrew. Though she continued at dinner time to treat me with respect, I never after had an opportunity of being alone in her company; and she returned next morning to the boarding school.

As yourself, dear Dennis, have lately been in a similar situation, you will easily conceive the anguish which rends my heart at the thought of my  
disappoint-

disappointment; and the forlorn, and distracted condition of my mind at the idea of her being *another's*, which her answer evidently implies. I shall only add, that I heartily implore forgiveness for the ridicule which I threw on you on that occasion, as your distress is now, I believe, more than equalled by that of,

Your's, &c. &c.

LETTER

## LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

MY last letter concluded with informing you that I had felt, for the first time, the pangs of disappointed love, heightened by the exquisite torments of jealousy. For the expression of the dear enchantress, relative to the *duty she owed to a parent*, left me no doubt that she was already engaged to the happy object of his choice. I doubt not that it has afforded you ample matter of triumph and revenge for my treatment of you when in a similar situation ; and you have, I imagine, by this time, made yourself sufficiently merry at my expence, as indeed

deed your truly facetious letter sufficiently indicates. However, as I am not present with you, I can the better stand the brunt of your ridicule; and must give you the farther satisfaction of declaring, that I either want your resolution, or that my disorder is of a more violent kind. In six weeks you was pretty well recovered. But a month has now nearly elapsed, and I feel myself in a more deplorable condition than even when I last wrote to you. To pass over the gloom of my mind, the anguish of my breast, at the thought of the object of my dearest affections being destined to the arms of another; my sleepless nights, my withered visage, my meager carcase, and a long doleful catalogue of distresses,

which

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which may be met with in every tale of love, the most convincing proof that I can give you of the reality of my flame, is, that I have hardly ate a pound of solid food since sentence was pronounced on me. In writing to you indeed, whom I have formerly so severely rallied for the same weakness, I endeavour to assume a jocose air; in company too, I affect a gaiety which I am a stranger to in my private moments; and vainly strive to eat against my appetite, in order to prevent suspicion of the cause of my complaint, and the ridicule (which I dread) attending it. But those attempts serve only to expose me the more. My acquaintance already conclude that love is the cause of my disorder



disorder, and (very happily for me) imagine that I have *left the fair object of it behind me*, and even that I had fled from London in consequence of the disappointment. My malady has not escaped the attention of Mr. Wilkins himself, who so little troubles his head with matters foreign to his pursuits; though he does not seem to have any suspicion that even love is the cause; a passion which he has long since forgot, and therefore is less likely to suspect that it should rage to such excess in the breast of another. As he seems to have conceived a sincere affection for me, he has from time to time observed with concern the apparent decline of my health, and very kindly advised

vifed me to fuch methods, as in his opinion were moft likely to reftore it. He has occasionally lent me his horfe for the purpofe of air and exercife; directed the maid fervant to provide me proper reftorative diet; and recommended the ufe of ftomachic and corroborating medicines; though the two latter of thefe I have not paid much attention to. Still, however, he perceived that my health vifibly declined, and that I was already in a confumption, or in the moft imminent danger of it; and very kindly, and with all the follicitude of real friendship and concern, took more pains than you will readily believe in confidering my cafe. He feemed indeed, even to have laidaſide his philoſo-

philosophical studies, and to have had my recovery alone at heart; when one day, after having, as he fondly imagined, hit on something that would effectually relieve me, he ran into the shop, the joy of friendship sparkling in his eyes; evidently proceeding from the rapture which his heart felt at the thought of being at length able to do me service; and after joyfully congratulating me on his discovery, and the assurances of the speedy return of my health, he thus communicated both his prescription and its *rationale*.

“ After the most attentive consideration of your case, my dear *Harcourt*, I discover the origin of it in loss of appetite, or to speak more properly

perly, *want of digestion*. Your own account confirms the idea; for you acknowledge that loss of appetite preceded the consumptive symptoms, and therefore was the cause of them; for indeed, what is more likely to produce consumption, than want of nourishment? The intention therefore should be to restore the digestive power. To this end you have taken the most celebrated remedies usually administered on those occasions, but unfortunately to no effect. This, however, I flatter myself will not be the case with the remedy I am now going to propose. It is the result of much study and attention to the subject; is founded on the very principles of digestion, and when mentioned you will instantly be struck with

with a conviction of its efficacy, and wonder that it could so long have been overlooked by the faculty. I am exceedingly happy also on your account, as having been the *occasion of the discovery*, and of being the first person on whom was tried a remedy which will prove of such infinite service to mankind, because it will be the means of rendering your name equally immortal with that of the discoverer.

I need not inform you that digestion is now demonstrated to be the effects, not of muscular compression, of attrition, of coction, or of fermentation, but merely of *solution*; that the gastric juice is a proper menstruum

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for that purpose; and that animals whose aliments are different, have different kinds of this juice, answerable to the nature of the food to be digested. This fact is so certain, that we now know that the stomach is not necessary to the digestion of food. For if the gastric juice be taken from a dead animal, and put into a vial, with proper aliment, in a due degree of heat, that process will be performed as effectually as in the stomach itself. Thus also eggs may be hatched by the heat of an oven, as completely as by incubation of the hen.—The stomach therefore may be considered as a mere *vessel*. And it seems a matter of indifference, whether the solvent of the food be furnished to it by the  
glandules

glandules of that viscus, or from without. From the *human* stomach opportunities of obtaining this menstruum do not often occur;—though I think it may be contrived by means of a proper flexible syphon, or rather by causing a fasting person to swallow pieces of sponge, which when sufficiently wetted, may, by means of strings fastened to them, be withdrawn — But suppose we content ourselves at present with having recourse to the gastric juices of those animals whose food is of a similar nature to our own. The digestive faculties of dogs, and of swine, come the nearest to ours; from them therefore it is most adviseable to procure the liquid we are in quest of.



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I counsel then, that you take a certain quantity of gastric juice three or four times every day, and, immediately after, a proper proportion of food: I infer from analogy, that the juice thus taken will even create that very sensation which we call *hunger*; (and from hence also, and what has been said, it is evident that your disorder proceeds originally from want of the secretion of a proper quantity of the irritating solvent) and thus should we have an ARTIFICIAL digestive process exactly similar to the NATURAL one. You may even vary the nature of your solvent according to that of the food you wish to eat. Thus, if animal food be desired, the gastric juice of the animals before mentioned,

ed, or even of the carnivorous ones will be proper ; but if vegetable, that of a sheep, a bullock, or an horse. By this means, we shall even *improve* upon nature. If the mode proposed be, on any account, inconvenient, the process may be carried on out of the stomach ; and when the solution is compleated, the chyle may be transferred, by an easy act of deglutition, into that viscus. If you have any suspicion of a deficiency of bile, or of pancreatic juice, a little of these may occasionally be added, according as the food be vegetable, or animal ; agreeable to the discovery of an ingenious modern philosopher : to which I would wish to add, that the *saliva* also should not be neglected. This

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advice is so perfectly consonant to the nature and principles of chylickation, that I am persuaded it must strike you too forcibly to render persuasives necessary to your adopting it; and the importance and general utility of the discovery, I presume, needs no illustration. I will therefore immediately make it my business to procure a sufficient number of proper animals, in order that you may be daily supplied with a due quantity of the required solvent; so that in a very short time, I assure myself of the happiness of seeing you, my dear Harcourt, recovered to your former fleshiness and vigour."

Gloomy

Gloomy as was the state of my mind, I could not but smile heartily at my kind master's odd proposal, and thanked him in the most cordial terms for his friendly anxiety and attention, relative to my health. Whatever was my own opinion of his singular prescription, it would have been ungrateful to have affronted him by a *refusal* to make trial of it; nor indeed did he wait to know my sentiments; but taking it for granted that they coincided with his own, left me immediately, in raptures at his discovery, in order to provide the animals he had mentioned.

Dogs therefore, after having been kept long fasting, were regularly kill-

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ed four times a day ; or in lieu of these the gastric juice was taken from the stomachs of sheep, hogs, or bullocks, killed by a neighbouring butcher, according to the nature of the food he imagined I should eat ; and great indeed were his expectations of the event. But however I might endeavour to save appearances with him, to you I frankly acknowledge, that I have not yet had stomach to give his remedy a trial. 'Tis now near three weeks that he imagines I have persevered in it ; and as I have constantly made an unfavourable report of its success, and am now even worse than before, he has at length consented to my discontinuing the remedy, and given up (with what reluctance and grief of heart  
I leave

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I leave you to guess) all the dazzling hopes which he had so fondly entertained concerning it.

I am, SIR,

Your's, &c.

LETTER

## LETTER IX.

DEAR SIR,

**I**N the variety of wild experiments which Mr. Wilkins makes himself, or his random application of those published by others, to the purposes of medicine, &c. it will not be wondered at if, once in his life, he should prove successful. The following may serve as an instance :

Our neighbourhood has of late been much infested with the small pox; and as people are naturally alarmed at the ravages of that disorder, and are now pretty well convinced of the advantages of *inoculation*, they have at last very generally adopted the  
latter



latter method. As Mr. Wilkins is continually employing his thoughts for the good of mankind, he has given no little attention to this destructive malady. His improvements on the *cold regimen* (as plunging the patient in *cold well water*, rolling him in *snow*, &c.) did not indeed appear to be attended with those capital advantages which he expected would result from them; but this can by no means be said of his new, and most *elegant method of communicating the INFECTION*. As he very freely mentions his idea to me, I am enabled to acquaint you with his motives, and the analogical *reasoning* which he employed on that memorable occasion.

“ The

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“ The principal reason (he observed) that the small pox proves so much more fatal in the natural way, than in inoculation is, that in the former case the infection is received by the *lungs*, one of the principal vital organs of the body; whereas, in the latter, 'tis communicated to the *arm*, a part of infinitely less importance. The disorder makes its most formidable appearance in the part first infected. Thus, in inoculation, the arm violently inflames; and the like must be the case with the lungs in the natural way. But this inflammation even in the arm, so disagreeable at best, generally painful, and sometimes even *dangerous*, I would wish to prevent, as well as the *terror* and *pain* arising from the usual manner of perform-

performing the *operation*; which frequently deter the timid from deriving the benefit of this salutary invention; and for which therefore it behoves the medical practitioner to find a remedy. I am much mistaken if the method I am going to propose, will not only remove these inconveniences, but even render the disorder itself more mild and innocent than is at present believed possible.

It is well known, that if *fixed air* be breathed by the lungs, it becomes instantly fatal to animal life; whereas the same fluid may be taken into the stomach without the least inconvenience.

The

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The poison of a *viper* infused into a wound will presently inflame the part, and in a short time put a period to the animal's existence; but the same poison received into the stomach is perfectly inoffensive.

From a consideration of these facts therefore, it seems to me, that if the variolous infection be communicated to the blood by the usual way of our food, the like salutary effects, with respect to this dreadful disease, will follow. For the matter being rendered less virulent by the process of digestion, and being besides, presently and equally distributed, by the circulation, throughout the body, not only no local inflammation can take place, but  
the

the disorder itself will be so mild, that  
 —— by heavens! I am resolved to  
 make trial of it this very evening.”

Ravished with the idea, and eager  
 to put it in execution, he immedi-  
 ately took horse and galloped away  
 to the house of a poor labourer, in  
 a neighbouring village, whose child  
 he engaged to inoculate *gratis*. For  
 this favour the parents, as you may  
 imagine, were not a little thankful.  
 After giving a cathartic or two, he  
 made a puncture in the arm with an  
 uninfected lancet, in order to preserve  
 appearances, and the same day brought  
 home some variolous matter, which he  
 had just taken. This being mixed with  
 a little milk, and corked up in a vial,  
 he

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he ordered me to direct, "The draught to be taken at night going to bed," and it was actually sent off, and administered accordingly. I confess I was curious to know the event of so singular an experiment, which a few days determined: for the patient took the infection, and went regularly through the disease; and that in a more favourable manner than we usually observe even in inoculation. The success of the experiment has induced Mr. Wilkins to adopt it as his general method; though, for obvious reasons, he has as yet divulged it to no one but me. He only waits, however, for a sufficient number of cases in order to make it public; and you will acknowledge that so extraordinary a *discovery*

*covery* will make no little figure in the history of inoculation.

Having mentioned this; I cannot but relate another singular experiment of a similar kind. A gentleman in a neighbouring town had been troubled with an ague, for which he had had the advice of his apothecary without success. He afterwards applied to various other practitioners, physicians as well as apothecaries; and though they prescribed all those remedies which are usually found efficacious in that disorder, his paroxysms continued to return with as much violence as ever. He had now been ill near ten months; at this period, he



was recommended to Mr. Wilkins, whose fame is by no means confined to his own parish. He likewise prescribed a variety of medicines, and those of the most powerful kind, the *blue vitriol* not excepted. Still however the disorder continued. Wilkins, chagrined at being thus baffled, and ambitious to succeed in a case wherein all his neighbours of the faculty had failed, applied himself very attentively to the consideration of the case, and the following was the result of his meditation.

He observed that the *Bark* was considered as the most capital remedy in intermittents; and believing it to be

be an absolute specific himself, concluded that its failure could only be owing to its being administred in an insufficient quantity. That it was this circumstance which at first occasioned it to be in disrepute. But that its character was afterwards restored by the illustrious Sydenham, who judiciously exhibited it in larger and more frequent doses. That the same had been said to be the case in our days, with respect to the guaiacum in rheumatisms. For these reasons he was determined to try what a large quantity of the bark would do in the present case. He did not see reason to conclude that it was hurtful in any quantity, more than many other vegetable

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substances which compose our *daily food*; into which he did not doubt but it might be introduced, in proper cases, with good effect; and that he should, as soon as the present fit was over, give the patient in question a much larger dose of this celebrated drug than has hitherto been ventured on.

He therefore ordered me to weigh up two ounces of the powder; and, without informing me of his intention, rode off with it to the patient. When he arrived, the fit had been over for some time. He put the whole two ounces into a bowl, and pouring on it a sufficient quantity of red wine, mixed them together, and made the

the patient drink it off at a draught. When he returned, I listened to his relation of the above circumstance with astonishment; but you will believe me when I inform you, that my astonishment was still greater when I learnt that the patient had taken that enormous dose without the least inconvenience following, and that from that hour he had no return of his disorder.

With respect to myself, I am almost ashamed to inform you that I continue in the same declining way as when I last wrote, and have not at present any hope of amendment. Of this at least I am certain, that there is but *one* remedy——could *that* be

H 3

applied

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applied, it would have a greater and more instant effect than even the very extraordinary one which I have been describing.—But that remedy must for ever be despaired of by

Your unfortunate Friend, &c.

LETTER

## LETTER X.

DEAR SIR,

I Have the satisfaction (if indeed it may be called one) to inform you that I am not only beloved and respected by Mr. Wilkins, but that I also enjoy the good opinion of such of his patients as I have hitherto had occasion to visit. My success in this respect would be the more flattering in that I find, by occasional hints, that W. is not at present so much esteemed in his medical character as he used to be some years ago. The reason privately assigned for it is, that his intense application to the study

H 3

of

of philosophy has by no means been favourable to his intellects; and that he begins to make his practice too much subservient to his philosophical vagaries. As it is known that I had my medical education in London, and as I am not without a share of that gravity which is so becoming in a medical practitioner, (at least since *Easter* last) my opinion has, in more than one instance, been preferred even to that of Mr. W. and some are even partial enough to send for me by choice; taking care however so to word the message, as to avoid giving Wilkins offence. Were I inclined to settle here, I should undoubtedly use my endeavours to cherish this prejudice in my favour, and should indeed have a fine opening. But as it is, I am not in the least desirous  
of



of embracing this advantage ; because, for a reason which will easily occur, it would now be inconsistent with the peace of my mind, not only to settle for life in S——, but even to continue long in this part of the country. Besides, my situation in Mr. Wilkins's service is, on another account, very far from being so agreeable as I at first imagined.

Whether the unhappy situation of my mind, and the relaxed state of my body in consequence thereof, render my temper more irritable and impatient than usual, I shall not determine ; I confess I should be ashamed to mention what you will meet with in the sequel to any other person ; but as  
I do

I do not scruple to divulge the little secrets, and even *weaknesses* of my heart to you, I shall make no apology for the subject matter of the remainder of this epistle.

I have already mentioned that our two culinary domestics are upon the most amicable, or rather amorous terms, and that the female is even the active person in the amour. Much of my time is necessarily spent in their apartment. I generally sup with them, frequently breakfast, and sometimes dine, when Mr. Wilkins happens to be out, or otherwise engaged. And there are besides a thousand little occasions which bring me into the kitchen (such as dress, thirst, the fire, &c.) which  
you

you need not be informed of. On these occasions I always endeavour to put myself on such a level with them as to keep clear of their ill natured reflections, and you know me to be perfectly affable and free, despising those airs of superiority, which many in our station are apt to assume. Mr. C—— always took care that his apprentices and journeymen should be treated with a proper degree of respect. But Mr. Wilkins is too much absorbed in speculation to attend to affairs of so trivial a nature; though I am convinced that had he the least idea of my disagreeable situation, he would take effectual methods to redress it.

I have

I have reason to think that they are jealous of Mr. Wilkins's kindness to me. Being old servants in the family, and my seniors also with respect to *age*, they seem to think they have a right to a superiority over me, which Wilkins's partiality renders it particularly necessary for them to assert. At Mr. C—'s the porter was duly subordinate to the journeyman. But if I want Solomon to carry out a medicine, or do any thing in the shop, he comes not but at his own convenience, unless W. happens to be in the way; and if Deborah has occasion for his assistance, she must always be served first. If the urgency of the patient's case obliges me to be importunate, "They have no notion of *being* commanded by *servants*; one  
*master*

“ master is enough ; some folks are  
 “ very fond of taking the *gentleman*  
 “ upon them, though they want the  
 “ *means*,” with a number of similar far-  
 casms ; which though I do not think it  
 worth while to make any reply to, yet  
 as I am conscious that my behaviour  
 does not merit such treatment, I con-  
 fess it gives me some uneasiness, and  
 makes me more careful than I other-  
 wise should be of my conduct towards  
 them. I even frequently do those lit-  
 tle offices myself to avoid the disagreea-  
 ble consequences of setting him about  
 them. Perhaps if I assumed a proper  
 degree of firmness, and treated these  
 ungenerous people in a more spirited  
 manner, their behaviour to me would  
 be more obliging. But seeing the  
 easiness

easiness of my temper they impose on me. The man seems of himself to be civil enough, and would, I believe, go on very well, was he not tutored and set on by his virago. This is not the most disagreeable part of my situation. I may safely venture to hint my suspicion to you, that Deborah in the fury of her despair, has, if I may guess by her waist, suffered Solomon to take a sample of her *cupidity*; and that in consequence of disliking the *goods*, he is grown cooler than she could wish; for she takes unusual pains to demonstrate to him on every occasion, that he has the greatest share of her attention and respect, and seems to endeavour to shew her fondness for *him*, by her contempt of *me*. If I sit with them at  
night

# QUIXOTE. III

night after business is over, or at other intervals of leisure, her whole discourse is directed to Solomon, as if there was not a third person in company. If I venture to join in the conversation, (for you know me to be a lover of society) the answer, if I get any, is as much distinguished by the croisness of its *tone* as that of her language to her paramour is by its affected fondness, she evidently intending that he should *notice* the contrast. (*N. B. Dont imagine that I am jealous.*) Perhaps also a certain *consciousness* suggests to her, that if she be seen to treat me with common civility, Solomon might, for good reasons, suspect her *virtue*. You, I believe, are pretty well convinced that I by no means, make a God of my belly



belly, and that I never had a wish to fare better than the meanest servant at Mr. C——'s table. But how would you, and your fellow labourers feel yourselves, should your cook, immediately on setting down to supper, help your porters to the nicest and best parts of the entertainment, leaving the coarse refuse for you? Yet if the wing of a fowl, or the fragment of a nice pudding, pye, or custard, happens to be left at dinner, I have the mortification to see an inferior servant helped to it, while myself am left to feed on bread and cheese, or other homely fare; and a bottle of wine, cribbed out of the cellar, is lovingly emptied by my two associates, while I, at the same table, am suffered to regale myself with small beer.

beer. To treat her favourite with *tid bits*, is a privilege enjoyed by the cook time out of mind ; but when it is done in the company of a third person, to ask him to *taste*, would be no more than a mark of common civility. As the party in question (for Solomon I consider only as a cypher) is sensible that the *state of my appetite*, if not mere *compliment*, would have induced me to refuse, the slight must be considered as the greater ; and was evidently intended with that view, for reasons assigned. I impute this behaviour, however, to want of breeding, and pass it off as well as I can. And in order to subject myself to as little uneasiness in this way as possible, I have of late, especially as the weather is now warm, either

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kept myself more in the shop, or gone out. Perhaps also, my *mere presence* was one cause of their odd behaviour towards me, as it proved an impediment to their pleasures.

On these accounts, however, and another which I need not mention, I shall by no means think of continuing here. I would even have left S—— before now, but that it is no recommendation to have quitted a first place so soon, and that Mr. Wilkins's kind treatment is an antidote to that which I meet with from his domestics. The moment that I can do it with reputation, I certainly shall get another master—if indeed the ill state of my health will

will permit me to engage in his service.

On a review of this letter, I cannot but ask pardon for its contents, which after all I should not have troubled you with, but that it may serve to prepare you for the difficulties which you must expect to meet with when you leave Mr. C——. The fate of a journeyman apothecary, without fortune, or friends, (though that is not your case) is truly deplorable; and though my situation is by no means agreeable, yet I have sufficient reason to console myself on comparing it with that of several of my old school-fellows, now in the same undesirable capacity.

I am, my dear Friend, yours, &c.

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L E T T E R XI.

DEAR SIR,

I Must acknowledge myself greatly obliged by your kind attention to my health, and should be ill-deserving of your friendship, if I did not endeavour to put your judicious advice in practice. I am as much convinced as you can be, that nothing but *resolution* is wanting; but at the same time it must be remembered, that all men are not blest with an equal portion of that virtue; and that they vary hardly in anything so much as their degrees of sensibility. At the same time that I am making my acknowledgments to you, it would be ungrateful not to mention  
the

the obligations of a similar kind, which I am under to another, and which therefore shall be the subject of this letter. I lately gave you one instance of Mr. Wilkins's kind attention to my health; but he has since been still more assiduous in his friendly endeavours to restore it; and a few days ago, after having been locked up in his study the whole forenoon, solely intent on contemplating my case, he ran in haste into the shop, and with a mixture of real joy, and affectionate concern in his countenance, took me by the hand, and thus addressed me.

“ I need not, my dear Harcourt, mention the concern with which I have observed the unhappy state of your  
I 3 health;

health; and it is with grief I perceive, that notwithstanding my utmost endeavours to remove your complaint, it, on the contrary, visibly increases. I lately flattered myself that I had not only discovered an easy method of recovering *you*, but that the same plan would have been of the most essential service to the world in general. The grief which the failure thereof has occasioned me on your account, I need not mention; though I can hardly yet persuade myself but that it may be useful, and even effectual in many cases; and I mean in future to give it another trial. That it has not succeeded with you, may be owing to contingent circumstances, which I cannot at present explain. But waving that point, I have  
ever



ever since, at times, most ardently applied my thoughts to your case, and flatter myself that I have now hit on a method which will not fail to produce the effect I have long so earnestly desired." I cordially thanked him for his affectionate concern and attention; and he thus proceeded.

"I at first meant to have proposed the injecting of proper nutriment, already animalized—our artificial chyle, for example—at once into the vascular system; but as the operation must be attended with pain, I have laid aside that idea, especially as I flatter myself that the method which I am now about to mention will better answer the end.

At all events we can but have recourse to the other, if this fails.

“ It is the duty of the medical practitioner, to avail himself of every discovery in philosophy, and to turn it to use in the healing art for the general good. I presume it would be superfluous to attempt explaining to you the doctrine of *animal absorption*, since it has of late been so clearly illustrated by a deservedly eminent anatomist of our own country, whose performance you doubtless have read; but it seems to me that a very capital use may be made of that doctrine, which has escaped the attention of its justly celebrated discoverer. We are to reflect, however, that *Rome was not built in a day*. Improvements

provements in philosophy advance by  
 slow degrees. The age in which the  
*loadstone* was discovered, remained ig-  
 norant of the most important uses  
 of it.

“ The *lymphatics* are proved to be a  
 system of *absorbent vessels*; and facts  
 have sufficiently demonstrated, that be-  
 sides the fluids which they absorb from  
 the cavities of the body, they have  
 also the power of inhaling substances,  
*ab extra*, when these substances are  
 duly applied to the skin. Thus, mercury  
 is imbibed by them in consequence of  
 mercurial frictions, as is proved be-  
 yond controversy by the salivation  
 which succeeds. There are other  
 known proofs of *extraneous absorption*,  
 if

if I may use the term; as in communicating the small pox by inoculation; and similar instances which I need not relate. But physicians have confined their ideas in practice, to *medical* absorption; and it is matter of astonishment to me that they should so strangely have overlooked another, a daily obvious, and far more important effect of this power.

“ It is well known that butchers are usually fatter than other men, though they perhaps eat less; for *as fat as a butcher* is a proverbial expression. It is still more generally known that cooks are in like thriving condition, though it is also certain that cooks eat least of all other people; the heat to which they  
are

are expofed, and the fmell of the victuals, taking away their appetites. Notwithstanding, however, that the cook eats *little*, and yet grows *big*, ſhe uſes a very conſiderable degree of exerciſe, which, together with the evaporation from the ſurface, in conſequence of the heat of the kitchen, muſt neceſſarily occaſion a great expence of fluids. The butcher too labours hard, and perſpires ſcarcely leſs than the cook. As nevertheless ſo great a quantity of nutriment is derived into the bodies of theſe people as to produce the effect mentioned; my quere is, *whence this nutriment proceeds?* That it does not get into the ſyſtem by the *primæ viæ*, appears from what has already been obſerved, and as there is but one alternative

tive, absorption is the only method by which it can be derived. Now, the hands of the butcher are continually greasy with the fat of his meat; but the fat is the most nutritive part of animal aliment; it is therefore absorbed by the lymphatics, and carried into the system, where it produces the effect noticed. The cook is not only in a similar predicament with respect to her hands, but the air which surrounds her on every side is loaded with nutritive effluvia, exhaled from the various aliments exposed to the fire, which therefore are in like manner inhaled, and that as well by the lymphatics in the lungs, as by those throughout the whole surface of the body; whence, by the way, we have also the reason why cooks  
even

even exceed butchers in fatness. We have, therefore, a very natural and obvious method of nutrition in cases where the usual one fails; and I cannot but repeat my astonishment at its having been hitherto so unaccountably overlooked by the learned in these matters.

“ The fact being indisputable, that nutrition may be performed by means of the absorbent system, my advice is, that the idea be adopted with respect to yourself. I therefore earnestly recommend to you, to expose the surface of your body and lungs occasionally, to the effluvia of proper aliments, and also to rub, four or five times a day, a sufficient quantity of these aliments into  
the



the most convenient parts of the surface of your body. I have the highest expectations from this admirable method, my dear Harcourt, and advise you to it in the full assurance of its success. From a consideration of the premises, a mind enlightened like yours must be too fully convinced of its efficacy to render arguments needful; I will, therefore, immediately give orders to the maid to furnish you with every thing that may be requisite to so important a purpose, as I am determined that you shall begin this very evening."

He was so much in a hurry that he did not wait for my approbation; and to night I am to commence the process with mutton suet and vinegar. Whether

ther or no he suspects that I deceived him in the *digestion* affair, I cannot tell; but himself means to be my operator in the present instance. I find it impossible to evade; and as he seems determined, I will not appear so ungrateful as to affront his kindness by a refusal. Making a *merit* of necessity therefore, I shall suffer myself (a providential return, perhaps, for my late jest upon him) to be put to bed to night in as greasy a condition as the cook or the butcher, from whom he took the hint of the operation. And it is not unlikely that I shall dream of being turned Roman Catholic, and near my end, having already received *extreme unction*. When I write again, I will let you know the event; but, believe

lieve me, I am heartily sick at thought of the course. And perhaps you will rather be inclined to be maliciously pleased with, than to pity, my persecution.

I am, &c.]

LETTER

LETTER XII.

DEAR SIR,

I Ventured to foretel the effect which my situation, as alluded to in my last, would have on you; and your answer has by no means undeceived me. I could, however, better have borne your good humoured rally, had it been free from the malicious pity with which you have occasionally seasoned it; and which only serves to make your ridicule the more keen and severe. This kind of writing is your *forte*, and I should be careful, in future, of giving you occasion to exercise it. I confess, however, that my weakness, and former treatment of you, deserves

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even

even more than the pleasantry with which you handled me; and I begin to flatter myself that you will not again have occasion to display your satirical talent on the *former* topic, though it will, at all times, give me pleasure to be the occasion of your exerting it, either on *that*, or *any other*.

My last letter gave you reason to conclude, that the present would treat wholly of alimentary frictions, and their effect on my health. You will find, however, that I have since had occasion to employ my pen on a very different subject.

In compliance with the friendly and importunate advice of my affectionate  
master,

master, I suffered my legs to be daily greased with mutton suet, my thighs to be rubbed with vinegar, my hands and feet to be immersed for an hour or two at a time in milk, mutton porridge, or vegetable decoctions, and my lungs, together with the whole surface of my body, to be exposed to a variety of vegetable and animal effluvia, properly corrected with acids and fixed air. It would have forced a smile in the countenance of Diogenes to have beheld me under the operation, or to have viewed the earnest attention, and anxious expectancy, so strongly expressed in the features of my kind operator. I had not, however, undergone this course above three days (to little effect as you will easily ima-

gine) before I received the following letter, inclosed in a cover, and apparently directed in a *male hand*.

S I R,

“ The holidays for Michaelmas being at hand, I cannot but write to you, after what has past, to desire, and humbly to insist on your not again mentioning the subject which occasioned my reserved behaviour to you previous to my leaving home. As such a conduct is quite unnatural to me, it will by no means be pleasing to re-assume it; and I have judged proper to advise you of this, previous to my return, because it will otherwise be impossible for me to behave to you with that becoming freedom, and unreserve which your station in my father's house intitles you to.



to. If that behaviour be not preserved, it may give him suspicions, which it will be necessary for me to clear up, though gratitude, in return for your good opinion of me, would rather incline me to be silent on that point. If however, you have reason to think you cannot observe this injunction, you will oblige me infinitely by taking proper measures, in order to prevent our meeting again. Was my real situation known to you, you would not deem this conduct the effect of pride, or of any other unworthy motive in

MARIA WILKINS."

P. S. I need not, I hope, request of you to destroy this letter as soon as you have read it; but do not, *by any means*, answer it."

K 3

When

When I opened the letter, and saw it was written in a *female* hand, my curiosity led me to look at the signature previous to the perusal ; and judge you, who have been in a similar situation, what was my surprise, my rapture ! at seeing the dear name of my beloved MARIA, the fair cause of my sufferings, and the only source from whence I could soon hope for a release from them ! Transported, I pressed it ardently to my lips, and not doubting that its contents were propitious, already flattered myself with the fond assurance that heaven, in pity to my distress, and moved by my earnest prayers, had altered her sentiments in my favour ; and in the extacy of gratitude and joy, fell involuntarily on my knees, pouring

pouring out the warm overflowings of my heart to the author of so great a blessing!—But figure to yourself also, dear friend, my feelings on reading its contents; the death-cold damp which struck upon my heart, in a moment quenching all my fond dazzling hopes; and the torture that I felt at the idea of parting never to see her more! For a few moments I remained in a state of total insensibility; but recollection soon returning, and painting my distress in the most lively colours to my imagination, the agony of my breast was unutterable; roused by which I became for a while frantic, gave full loose to the whirlwind of passion; and lucky it was that no one happened to be near, as from the unguarded manner in which I raved

out my disappointment, the whole secret must have been discovered.—But I will not trouble you with the remainder of a scene, which however serious it was to me, to you perhaps may appear unimportant, or even ridiculous. Suffice it that I am at this moment in the greatest imaginable distress of soul; and that on pretence of a family misfortune, I have given Mr. Wilkin's notice of the necessity I am under of quitting his service, previous to the approaching holidays, at which he seems to be no less sincerely grieved than myself. But to be daily in the company of all that my heart holds dear, and yet be obliged to behave to, and be treated by her with indifference, I cannot bear; and I would perish sooner than

than give her offence. To see her again, however ardently it may be desired by me, can now only tend to distress her, and add to my own uneasiness. I will therefore devote myself a voluntary sacrifice to her repose, and for that purpose have written to request that you will endeavour to procure me either a lodging, or a place, as speedily as possible; and if you hear of any deserving person, whom you think I may safely recommend to Mr. Wilkins as my successor, you will add greatly to the obligation by sending him.—The pangs which I shall feel on my dear Maria's account, when I leave S——, added to my grief at parting with Mr. Wilkins, (for whom  
though

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though I laugh at his oddities, I have  
a real affection, as he certainly has for  
me) will be better conceived by you,  
than described by

Your afflicted

And unfortunate Friend, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

TO MR. JOHN HARCOURT.

DEAR JACK,

**H**AD my Dulcinea given me as much reason to hope as yours, I should not have disgraced myself, nor insulted a friend, with so desponding an epistle as that which I last received from you. You are, I perceive, a perfect novice in matters of love. When a lady to whom I had freely declared a passion, and who had given me a denial, after so long an interval voluntarily writes me a letter, what am I to conclude but that she is either desirous of a renewal of my addresses, (which perhaps



perhaps she wondered I should have been so cold as not to have done in an epistolary way before; or at least that she has a regard for me; and in consequence thereof, knowing her situation, and obligation elsewhere, is afraid to see me lest it should weaken her attachment where rigid duty commands? But it does not appear that you have ever asked her but once; and what kind of a lover must you be to be satisfied with the first refusal! The punctilio, the decorum of the sex, requires that they should have opportunities given them of denying a man several times, and even at last to be as it were even forced into compliance, lest they should be thought too forward. They expect it; and I appeal to yourself, whether

whether if she had yielded when you first put the question, you would ever have felt your present degree of passion? There is even a kind of *instinct* which teaches this doctrine to every woman of discernment. But let us argue the case a little. The reason which she gave for refusing your request was, that duty forbid it. I do not recollect, however, that you make any mention of a rival. Had you made such a discovery, you would have considered it of too important a nature to be passed over in silence. Was there one in the case, you would certainly have heard of it from some quarter or other, as I doubt not you have been sufficiently *indirectly* inquisitive in that respect. She seems indeed too young, and to have been

too little in the company of our sex to have thought much about wedlock ; and Wilkins, by your account, is so much absorbed in his studies, that the very idea has probably never yet occurred to him. As to the mere word *duty*, it may only imply, that being under age, and having a laudable idea of parental authority, she might not think herself at liberty to engage in an affair of such importance to her future happiness, without her father's consent ; or perhaps, as Wilkins himself is such an oddity, there may be some whimsical circumstance in the case, which would never occur to a man of the world, but which may not only be discovered, but even overcome by spirit and perseverance. It does not appear to me but  
that

that you have every thing to hope for in this business, and nothing to fear. Did not the lady's letter favour the opinion, yet the sole circumstance of your being a likely and accomplished fellow (you know I am no flatterer) would be sufficient to convince me of the probability of an unexperienced girl, just entered the age when the little god begins to be busy about the heart, falling in love with you; especially as you had already made the advance, in so warm a manner as you have represented. Your meagre appearance, loss of appetite, and the accounts which she will in course hear of your illness, will convince her of the reality of your flame; for vanity will not be wanting to suggest to her the cause. If she has not  
an

an unkind heart indeed, (and the contrary, together with a most generous and noble disposition, appears by her letter) mere gratitude will incline her to pity, and even relieve you; and if it be true that she is already smitten, as I think I can venture to affirm, it will increase and compleatly rivet her affection. But even your cowardice may be turned to account; for the idea of your quitting her father's service, merely to prevent giving her offence, however painful it must be to yourself, will probably have greater influence with her than any other circumstance. It will be a tacit acknowledgment, that you love her too well to be able to bear her indifference; and that you find it impossible to observe the like  
conduct

conduct towards her. In every light, therefore, in which I can view your case, you appear to be in a fair way with respect to the *lady*; and your own account sufficiently proves, that with the father there can be no danger of difficulty. He has conceived a friendship, or rather *affection* for you. You have him even *under your thumb*, by being in possession of his absurdities. His passion for study, and approaching age, will incline him soon to take a partner, or retire. In either case, who will be so proper as one already in the good graces of his patients, and with whom he has so fine an opportunity of happily settling his only child? You may even treat him *en cavalier*, should he refuse his consent, and threaten to op-



pose him in his business. The predilection of his patients for you, (which *by all means* endeavour to improve) and their declining opinion of him, (which it will also be to your interest to further) as he cannot but be sensible of, so they will scarce fail to have their due effect. Should this, however, not be the case, I advise you to put your threat immediately in execution, which you may do, in my opinion, with every prospect of success; when, if you are still determined on your matrimonial point, it is but waiting till the fair one is of age, (or what think you of a *trip to Scotland?*) and it is much indeed if time does not reconcile a father to a once dearly loved, and deserving daughter; so that if you marry her at first  
without



without a farthing, the fortune will come in time. If you want money in the interim, my purse, you know, is open to you.

I have, therefore, written by the return of the post, and in haste, as you will perceive by the stile of my letter, to advise and request of you, by all means, as you value your own repose, not to leave Wilkins. Your future fortune and happiness, if I am capable of judging, depends on your continuing with him. As however, you have given him notice to leave him, do not at present inform him of your intention to stay; for I would have you appear to be leaving him when your fair inamorata returns. And that he might

not engage another, tell him that you have written to a friend, who has engaged to furnish him with an assistant of indisputable character before you leave him, so that he need not enquire elsewhere. If others apply in the mean time by chance, either take measures to prevent his agreeing with them, or if these fail, inform him that you shall now be able to stay; though if possible, avoid the latter; which with proper address, may easily be done. When she comes home, affect an unhappiness that you were not gone sooner, and take some method to make her sensible of it. But this and your conduct in general in this important concern, I leave to be regulated by your own good sense and discretion. I have,  
dear

dear Harcourt, your interest in this business much at heart, and must be free to tell you, that in my opinion, it will be your own fault, if you do not fulfil the ardent wishes of

Your sincere friend, &c.

SAMUEL DENNIS.

P. S. Let me know the event as soon as possible, as I am not a little anxious about it. And when convenient, do not forget to favour me with further anecdotes of Wilkins's quixotism. I am much delighted with it.

LETTER

## LETTER XIV.

TO MR. SAMUEL DENNIS.

My Dear Friend,

**T**HOUGH your truly affectionate letter did not inspire me with any considerable degree of hope, yet in deference to your opinion, and that I might not have to accuse myself, I resolved to follow your friendly advice. Under the daily operation of alimentary frictions and fumigations, therefore, I past, in the most painful suspense and anxiety, an interval of near three weeks; and was so far from receiving benefit, (probably, however, on account of the agitation of my mind,) that even Wilkins was at length convinced, by the increase of my complaint,

plaint, of the inefficacy of his remedy, and dropt it, though with visible marks of the most cutting disappointment. His concern and assiduity, were, however, unabated, and I had stronger proofs of his friendship, than I had ever before experienced, in the real grief which he manifested at the idea of parting with me; but which I shall not now trouble you with an account of. I managed matters agreeable to your direction, till the fair cause of my uneasiness returned. She arrived in the forenoon, but I cautiously avoided seeing her till dinner time. You will guess at the distressed state of my mind in the interval, when I tell you that I was frequently obliged to have recourse to the volatile salts, and that I more

than once fainted. The tears which I shed, I am ashamed to mention. At length I was called to dinner, and if you picture to yourself a thief brought into open court before his accusers, or going to be hanged, you will have a pretty exact idea of the figure I made at first entering the room. My eyes were cast toward the ground; my heart became swollen, my knees knocked together, and from the manner in which I felt myself (more dead than alive) I cannot tell how it happened that I escaped fainting. You will pardon me when I tell you, that I inwardly cursed myself for having followed your advice, which had brought me into so awkward and painful a situation. I summoned, however, as a last effort, all

all the resolution I could muster, and advanced to my seat, but without daring to look in the face, the fair cause of my distress. The topic of discourse was, by Mr. Wilkins, immediately turned on me. He acquainted my charmer, (and in that, unwittingly becoming my advocate) “that I had been in a visibly declining state almost ever since she was left at home; and that every method had been ineffectually tried for my relief. That the cause of it was apparently uneasiness of mind, in consequence, as he imagined, of some family misfortune; on which account I was now, to his unspeakable regret, about to leave him.”—It would, by no means, become me to repeat the eulogiums which he was so kind as to  
pass



pass on me. I was pleased, however, to hear him take occasion to observe, that “he should have lost me before now, but that he had not yet been able to procure another assistant.” I longed, I confess, to know whether this harangue had any visible effect on the countenance of the fair object to whom it was addressed ; but dared not look up to satisfy myself. At length, to my unspeakable transport, I heard Mr. Wilkins say to her, “ my dear Polly, why dont you eat ? ”—She excused herself in a faltering and hesitating tone of voice, adding, that “ her journey had quite taken away her appetite.” There was, however, something so strongly expressive of a distressed situation of heart, in the manner

in which this was spoken, that I ventured to look up. I met her eyes fixed upon me with the most lively affection and anxious solicitude; but she instantly turned them aside with a blush, which was succeeded by a death-like paleness, and presently after she fainted away. I flew to her assistance, and heavens! what did I feel at having in my arms, all that my soul held dear!—But these thoughts were instantly lost in my anxiety for her distressed situation. Resigning her therefore, to the care of her parent, I flew with a lover's haste for proper volatiles; with which as quickly returning, I again supported her to my aching breast, and with all the assiduity of fond affection, applied my remedies. She recovered, opened her eyes, and finding

finding in whose arms she was, gave an involuntary shriek, and again fainted. Heavens! what were my feelings at that moment! Increased as they were by the apprehension that in her insensible state she might utter something that might betray her! To prevent this latter, I begged Mr. Wilkins to step into the shop for some æther, in order to rub her temples; and in the mean time as she was recovering, and not yet restored to sense, I had the inexpressible happiness to hear from her heavenly lips, “My dear Harcourt, I have been the unkind cause of this.” She opened her eyes, and fixed them on me with ineffable expression of affection and concern. I bathed her with kisses, pressed her to my melting bosom,

som, and was proceeding to pour out the overflowings of an heart repletewith gratitude and love; but recollecting her situation, and hearing her father's steps, she conjured me to be silent and careful of my behaviour; then gently put me from her, and assumed a dignity and sweet serenity of behaviour. Mr. Wilkins being now arrived, she thanked him affectionately for his kind solicitude, but begged him not to be alarmed, for that her fainting was only a consequence of the fatigue of her journey; and that she should soon recover her spirits, especially if he would permit her to retire awhile to her chamber, and lay down; a step which Mr. Wilkins much approved of.

Judge

Judge now, my dear friend, what were my feelings on this sudden, and to me wholly unexpected reverse of fortune. I was a few moments before compleatly miserable, but now one of the happiest of mortals, as I had the strongest reasons to conclude that I was possessed of the affections of her on whom my felicity wholly depended. You will easily imagine how anxiously I waited for an interview to clear up my remaining doubts. I sat down, however, with Mr. Wilkins, during the remainder of his dinner, with more cheerfulness than usual, taking care to talk as little on the subject of his amiable daughter as possible, and introducing some philosophical or medical topic, whenever he mentioned her.

her. By this means, and the serenity, or rather melancholy, which I assumed, I escaped suspicion. Dinner was now ended, and Mr. Wilkins, after seeing his beloved MARIA, and finding her so well recovered as to come down, went to visit his patients. Taking care then to send out Solomon on business, and to engage the maid in cookery for myself, with a view to prevent detection, I flew to the parlour, and threw myself respectfully at the feet of my adorable angel. I congratulated her on her recovery, thanked her for the unmerited honour of her letter, and apologized for not having yet quitted her father's service, agreeable to her injunction. I took the freedom to mention my own sufferings,

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the account of which, I observed, she had heard from Mr. Wilkins; the *effects*, her eyes must convince her of, and the *cause*, though it could not but be obvious to herself, remained as yet a mystery to all others; adding, that as I had once more the happiness, or perhaps misery, of living in her presence, I earnestly begged she would not be offended, if for the last time, as a few days would part us for ever—I presumed to ask whether I might yet flatter myself with the hope that time and my sufferings had wrought any change in her sentiments?

Her blushes evidently declared an inward painful struggle between duty  
and



and affection, and recovering her composure, she answered me as follows :

“ Whatever doubt, Sir, I might at first have entertained of the sincerity of your professions, it is now sufficiently apparent that they were unfeigned ; and I have neither the ingratitude to refuse you my pity, nor the prudery to affect an insensibility which I do not feel. Nevertheless, Sir, I must repeat, perhaps with regret, that my situation is such that I can by no means be instrumental to your happiness. I am the only child of the most affectionate of parents, whose *wishes*, much less *injunctions*, I would suffer any thing sooner than transgress. And I have it in express command, as

I value either his fortune, or what is infinitely more dear to me, his affection and blessing, never to think of entering into the marriage state. You may object, perhaps, that it is a singular humour. But it is not for me to question the propriety of his mandates, or the nature of his motives. He has had greater experience in life than me; is convinced that a state of celibacy is infinitely preferable to that of wedlock; his circumstances are such that he can have no other view than my happiness, and I am determined to abide by his command. I will yet, Sir, be frank enough to confess, that I feel for your situation. But absence, and new objects, may in time enable you to get the better of your weakness.

ness; and it will be a particular satisfaction to me, to hear of your future felicity and welfare."

Thus, my dear Dennis, a damp was a second time thrown on my glowing hopes, and even yourself must have approved, had I given up the contest. The latter part of this speech, however, was accompanied with such evident emotions of distress, notwithstanding her obvious struggles to suppress them, that I was tempted once more to interpose. Like a desperate gamester, therefore, I determined to put the whole issue upon a last cast; and collecting my spirits, ventured the following reply :

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"Forgive

“Forgive me, dear lady, if in an affair of such consequence to my repose, I for once violate my engagement. I feared that the obstacle to my happiness was of a very different nature from what you have mentioned, and from the tenor of your former answer and letter, concluded that you were already engaged to another. But if this be the only one, I imagine it by no means difficult to be surmounted. It needs no proof, I presume, that it is not only unjust, but *impious*, in a parent to presume to lay such a restraint. It is contrary to nature, and the express *command*, as well as evident *design* of the creator, which ought to be obeyed before any human authority. It is even *cruel*, and that *in the highest degree*.

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For, from the nature of the human frame, it must be so far from producing the effect intended, that it must necessarily involve in it your unhappiness, unless with his interdiction he could also reverse the established laws of nature. But it appears to me, Madam, that it is a mere whim of Mr. Wilkins, which time, and circumstances, may overcome. He loves you, you say, with the most ardent affection; of course he must naturally desire your felicity; which, when he finds that his unjust command impedes, the same affection will induce him to reverse. But, Madam, I have other hopes than these. I believe I may flatter myself that I enjoy his confidence and affection; and situated as I am with respect to his

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business, and the good opinion of his patients, it must appear to him to be not only for his interest, but even happiness, to make me blest. From these motives, properly considered, he may possibly be prompted to such a measure; by mere *voluntary inclination*; so that every obstacle, with respect to him, seems to be removed. In respect to yourself, Madam, if I may presume to judge from circumstances—if your late want of appetite and fainting, were as little the effect of your journey, as my present unhappy condition is of family misfortune—if a most tender, and I will add passionate expression, joined with my name during your late insensibility, (and which being involuntary, was natural) may be considered

sidered as arguments of affection, I am not wholly indifferent to you. Do not, loveliest of your sex, affect an apathy which you do not feel; make us both happy by the endearing acknowledgment, and it shall be my fault if the objection you urge be not removed."—I was proceeding; but observing the blushes to gather in her lovely countenance, her bosom to swell, the big tear to steal from her eye, and her whole soul to be overwhelmed with melting distress and sweet confusion, I seized the happy moment, and springing from the ground, ventured to clasp her to my beating bosom, urging her by the most tender and endearing solicitations, and had at length the inexpressible happiness to hear from her



lovely lips an indirect acknowledgment of a mutual passion. Resuming presently, however, her wonted dignity, with an innate modesty which exceeds the power of description, and a thousand times more endeared her to my heart, she gently but respectfully put me from her. We entered into a discussion of the particulars of our situation, and it was at length agreed that the affair should as yet be kept secret from the family; that our behaviour in company should correspond; that I should feign to Mr. Wilkins, though not immediately, for fear of suspicion, that my family affairs were settled; that therefore it would now be convenient for me to remain in his service; and that the misfortune alluded to, had been the cause of  
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my uneasiness of mind, and consequent ill state of health, both which would now in course be happily terminated.—

That as she was to return to school till Christmas, when she was to come home for good, we were to content ourselves with mutual assurances of affection and fidelity; and that in the mean time I should use my endeavours to ingratiate myself with Mr. Wilkins and his patients, so as to render it even necessary for him to consent to our happiness; for that notwithstanding what had past, she was still determined to abide by her duty, and resolution not to enter into any nuptial engagement without his approbation. As I had not the least doubt of overcoming Mr. Wilkins's scruples, I joyfully acceded to the terms.

terms. The remainder of the time that she continued at home, was to me one continued scene of extacy and bliss. Our opportunities of being together were frequent. I had repeatedly the happiness of hearing her sing, while, like the divine Cecilia, she accompanied her ravishing voice with a musical instrument. I danced with her more than once, (and she dances even more divinely, if possible, than she sings;) and in respect to cards, and other occasional amusements, scarce a day past but I was engaged in parties with herself, and her former companions. Among the latter were the finest and most accomplished young ladies in S—— and its environs. And not only my bliss was encreased, but my vanity flattered in  
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the most exalted degree, by the comparison of these with my beloved angel, all whom she as much surpassed, as themselves did the common run of their sex. And I cannot but add, that of all the women I ever beheld, she, in my opinion, comes nearest to angelic perfection, whether I consider the graces of her mien, the charms of her person, the perfection of her intellects, the elegance of her conversation, the enchanting sweetness of her temper, or the exalted virtues of her mind. My weak pen I am conscious, can give you no idea of her excellence; but were you like me, to have the happiness of being in her company, you would confess that all that I have said falls infinitely short of her perfections.

fections. To be united with her in wedlock, is the whole wish of my heart, and would constitute my greatest possible happiness; the consummation of which is the sole object of my prayers!—You will probably smile at the warmth of my language, and term it rhapsody; but I am carried beyond myself, in the endearing recollection of the uninterrupted and ravishing scenes of bliss, which I have so lately enjoyed; and which therefore, (if any is necessary) must be my apology. I have now only to inform you, that after a most affectionate and tender parting scene, she left S—— on Tuesday last, and that all my thoughts and wishes are now turned towards that blissful period  
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when she will return to my arms never to depart!

I have acquainted Mr. Wilkins with my fictitious change of circumstances, &c. and have the happiness to inform you that he seemed scarce less rejoiced at it than myself was at the late eclaireissement with my lovely MARIA; and in my next I shall, agreeable to your request, entertain you with fresh instances of his singularities.

I have now, my dearest friend, to thank you for all the happiness which I have been describing, as well as for the much greater portion which I hope to enjoy in future. To your friendly advice I owe my being again  
admitted

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admitted to the regions of felicity, from which I had considered myself as for ever banished. My most cordial acknowledgments are all that I can at present return; but trust that some future occasion will offer, to demonstrate by facts, the gratitude of

Your ever obliged Friend,

And devoted humble Servant,

J. HARCOURT.



END OF VOL. I.



